

RMCG

National Impact, Regional Delivery

**Robust M&E for Best Practice Australian
Horticulture Industry Development**

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 National Vegetable Extension Network
AUSVEG Hort Innovation

Certified

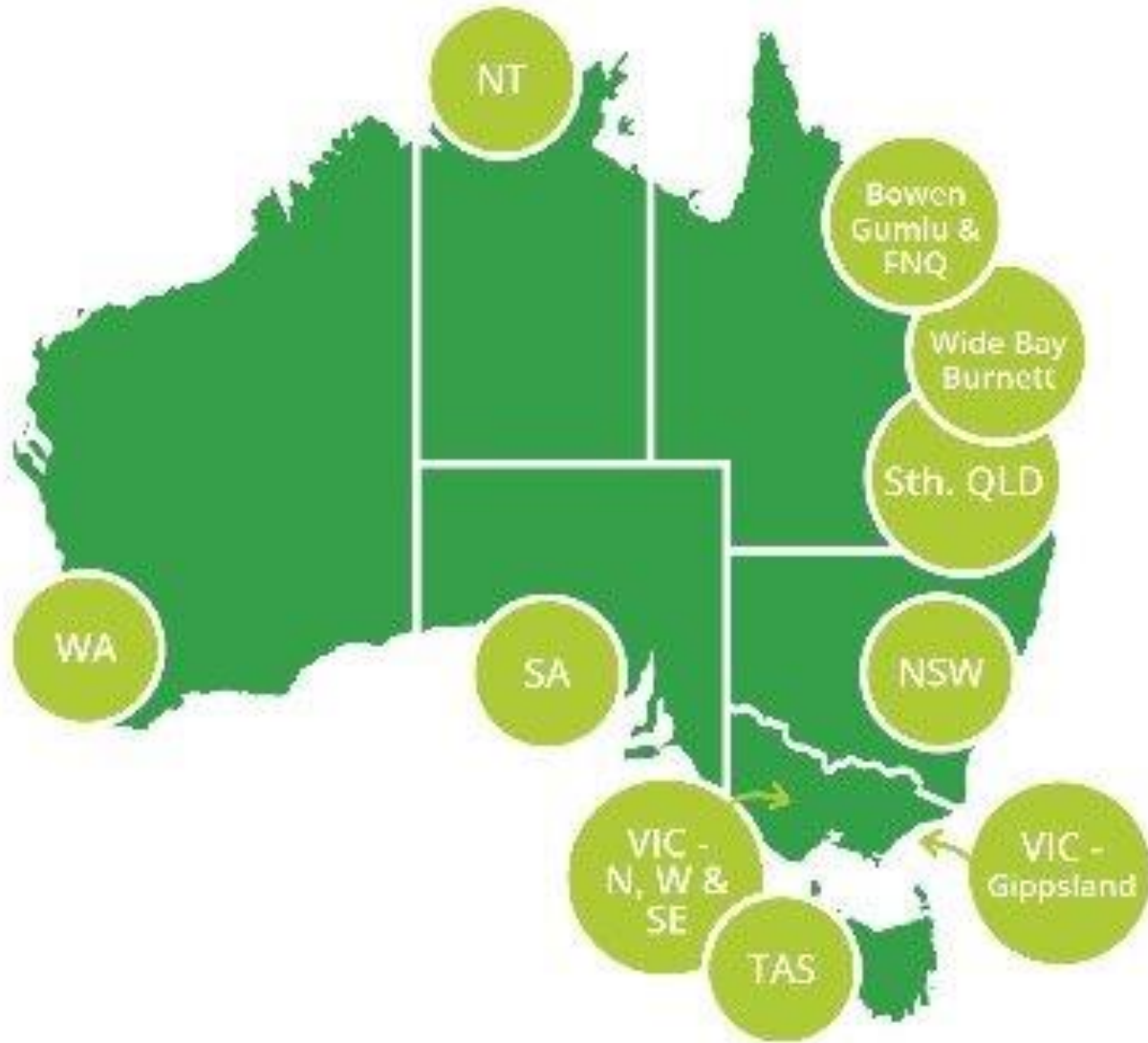


Corporation

Vegetable production in Australia



Five crops covered in the levy: Brussel Sprouts, Cabbages, Capsicums, Spinach & Carrots



What is VegNET?

- National Extension project for the Vegetable industry
- Delivered in 10 regions by regional partners
- Nationally coordinated through AUSVEG with M&E delivered by RMCG
- Currently in the third delivery phase and ongoing since 2016
- Single biggest investment through the Vegetable fund.
- VegNET phase 3, \$14m investment over 5 years funded by growers levy & matched by the Commonwealth Government

01 WHY?

- Demonstrate tangible outcomes and return on investment from the VegNET 3.0 project to levy payers, the broader vegetable industry and Hort Innovation as the investor
- Actively use M&E to support continuous improvement at the regional and national level
- Deliver value as an independent delivery partner to provide rigour and assess impact



02 WHAT?

- **Clear** – guided by existing 5-year Regional Extension Strategies and M&E Plans
- **Simple** – integrated into standard operating procedures of project team, doesn't duplicate effort
- **Useful** – adds value to existing milestone reporting and meetings (e.g. national project team, Regional/National Extension Advisory Groups)
- **Multi-scale** – regional and national scale
- **Supportive** – assist to identify and share successes and lessons learned, support innovation within the national team, able to provide guidance where needed



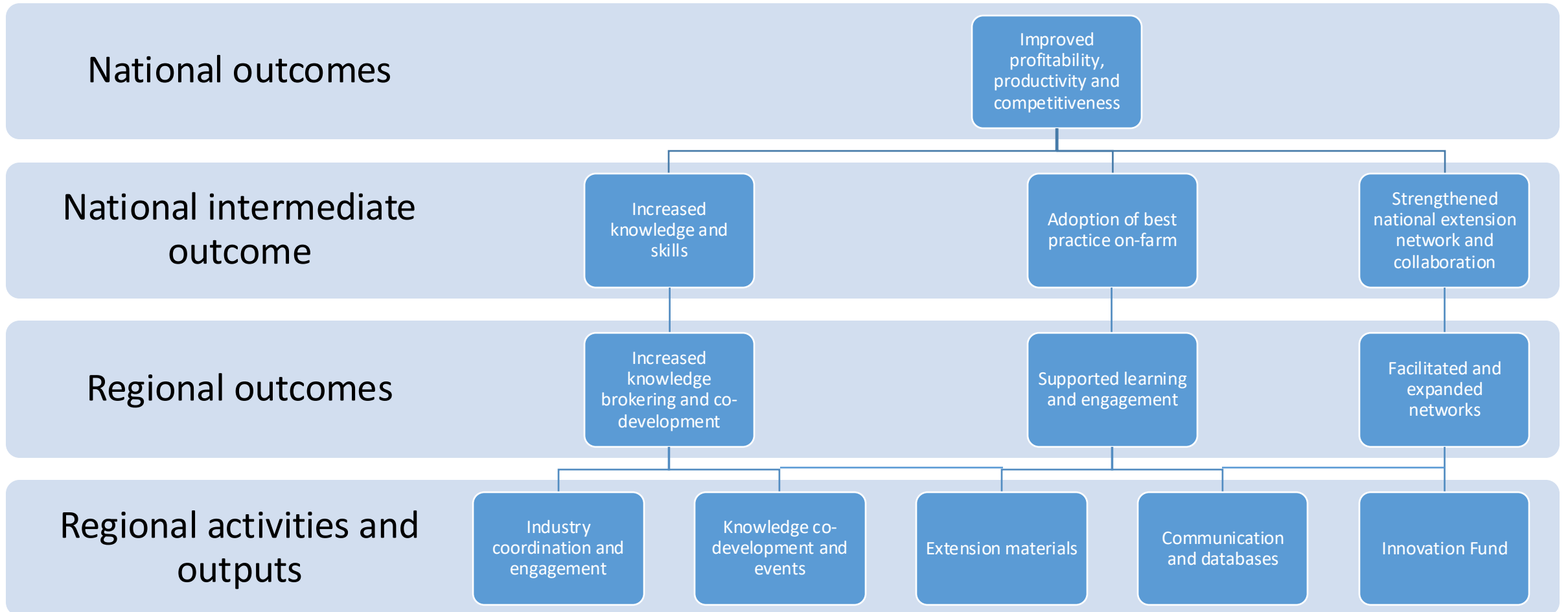
National M&E Manager Delivery VegNET 3.0

03 HOW?

- Work with you:
 - Regional and national scale
 - On priority issues – biosecurity; sustainability; integrated pest, disease, weed management; business management; soil management; ag tech; value adding and developing new markets
- Use standard tools and templates to assist Regional Development Officers (RDOs)
- Develop case studies and narratives
- Undertake practice change survey
- Develop and curate national M&E monitoring database
- Report back to RDOs and industry through a simple dashboard that tracks impact



Program logic



Funder perspective





M&E challenges

- Diverse regions and regional needs
- 10 regional partners with varying skills and aptitudes for M&E
- Over project length, some turnover in partners
- Need both quantitative and qualitative data
- Need consistency in collection to allow for data consolidation
- Feedback forms

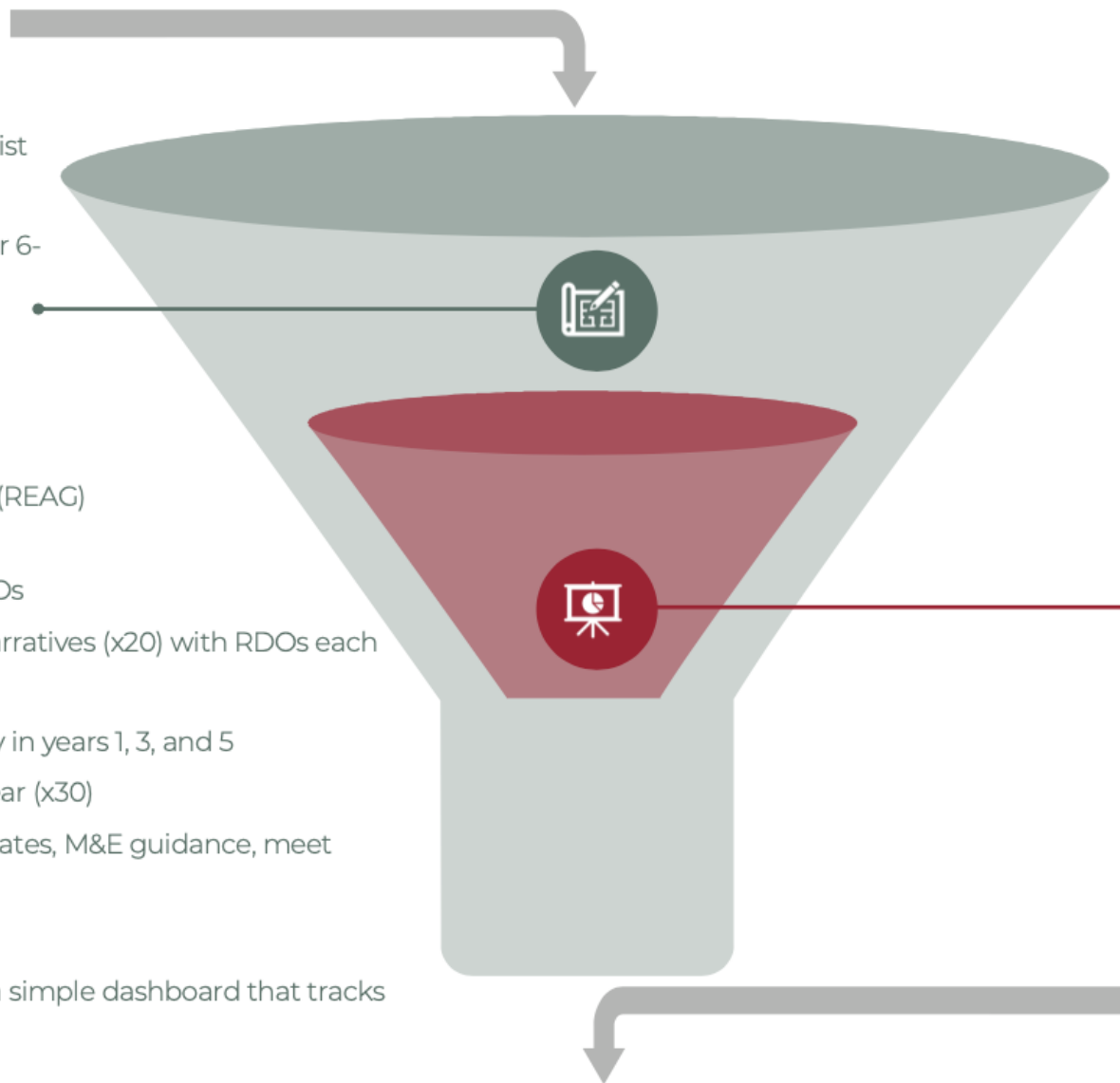
Deliverer Perspective

- Needed to demonstrate a robust M&E process
- 'Not marking our own homework'
- Demonstrate value for industry



National level The M&E Ecosystem – VegNET 3.0 National M&E Manager

- Revise program logic and review national M&E plan – defines what success looks like for the national project
- Develop M&E monitoring database – allows analysis of all regional data
- Develop standard tools and templates to assist Regional Development Officer (RDOs):
 - M&E scorecard 1-2 page template for 6-monthly milestone reports
 - Event feedback form template
 - Case study template
 - Narrative template
 - Regional Extension Advisory Group (REAG) reflection report template
- Provide M&E support and mentoring for RDOs
- Develop case studies (x10) and coordinate narratives (x20) with RDOs each year
- Develop and analyse practice change survey in years 1, 3, and 5
- Undertake key informant interviews every year (x30)
- Participate in monthly team meetings – updates, M&E guidance, meet RDO needs
- Develop 6-monthly M&E milestone reports
- Report back to RDOs and industry through a simple dashboard that tracks impact



Regional level

- Use existing strategies and plans to guide implementation:
 - 5-year Regional Extension Strategy – the “why”
 - Sub-project plans and annual plans – the “what”
 - Regional M&E plans – the “how”, review to make sure it’s relevant with support of National M&E Manager
- Use standard tools and templates to collect M&E data
- Identify case studies (x1 per year, per region)
- Develop narratives (x2 per year, per region)
- Distribute and promote practice change survey regionally in years 1, 3 and 5
- Participate in monthly team meetings – updates, M&E support, lessons
- Develop 6-monthly milestone reports to collate and analyse M&E data using the M&E scorecard template




3,991
VEGETABLE GROWING FARMS IN AUSTRALIA



29%
OF AUSTRALIAN VEGETABLE GROWERS ENGAGED (first two and a half years of program)



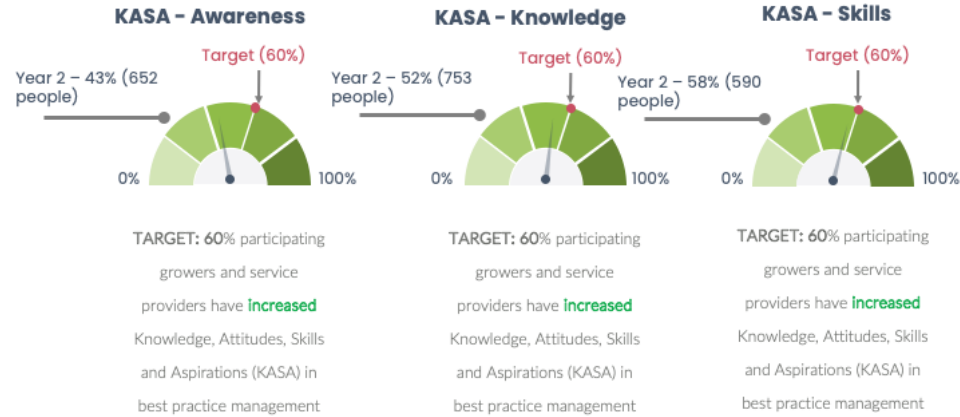
127,624 ha
AREA OF VEGETABLE GROWING IN AUSTRALIA



39%
REACH OF PROGRAM ACROSS GROWING AREA IN AUSTRALIA (first two and a half years of program)

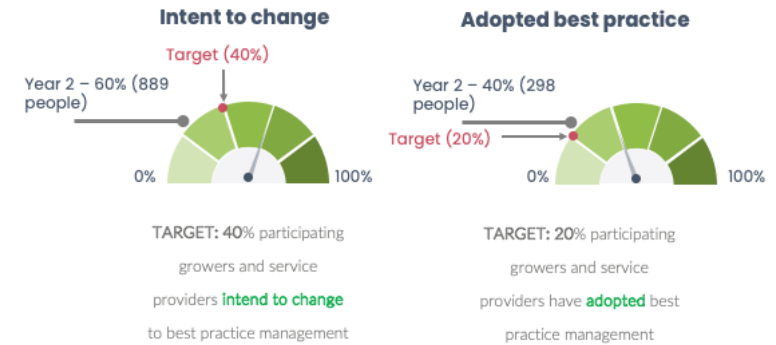
AWARENESS, KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS

Change in stakeholders KASA and knowledge sharing (data from first two and a half years of program)



INDUSTRY ADOPTION

Proportion of stakeholders that show intent to change or have adopted best practice (data from first two and a half years of program)



NATIONAL PRIORITY AREA COVERAGE

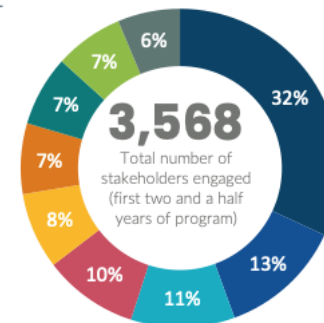
Progress of priority area focus projects at a national level (data at March 2024)

PRIORITY AREA	REGION	ON TRACK	PAUSED	PROBLEM BUT BEING MANAGED	REMEDIAL ACTION REQUIRED
Ag Tech	VIC - Gipps	100%			
Biosecurity	TAS, VIC - Gipps, WA	100%			
Business Capacity, Costs & Labour	QLD - WBB, SA, TAS, VIC - Gipps, VIC - N,W,SE, WA, QLD - Sth, WA	90%		10%	
Industry capacity	NT, QLD - Sth, WA	100%			
Markets	SA	100%			
Pests & Diseases	VIC - N,W,SE, NSW, NT, QLD - Sth, QLD - WBB, VIC - Gipps	100%			
Precision Ag	NSW, TAS, WA, QLD - Nth, QLD - WBB	80%		20%	
Production Systems	NSW, NT, TAS, V - N, W, SE	100%			
Soil & Nutrient Management	NSW, NT, TAS, VIC - N,W,SE, VIC - Gipps	80%	20%		
Waste Management	QLD - WBB, NSW	67%	33%		
Water Management	NT, SA,	100%			
Multiple	QLD Nth	100%			
Across all priority areas	National	91%	4%	4%	

STAKEHOLDER REACH & ENGAGEMENT

Proportion of engagement by stakeholder type

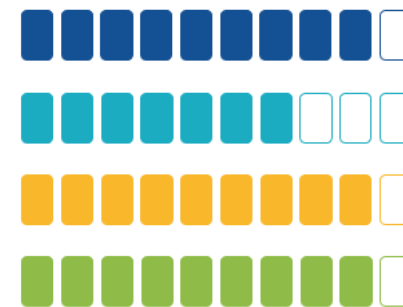
- Grower
- Agribusiness service provider
- Student or educator
- Government
- Other
- Supply chain participant
- Industry association
- Researcher
- Advisor



COLLABORATION

A measure of progress by growers, advisors and researchers along the collaboration continuum (data at March 2024)

- R&D RELEVANCE
- R&D ACCESSIBILITY
- RELATIONSHIPS & PARTNERSHIPS
- INFORMATION SHARING



Regional Development Officer Perspective

- Easy to use
- Consistent and aligned with milestone requirements
- Allowed space for experimentation in collection methods
- Supported through mentoring.





Lessons learned

- Consistent national scale up, with flexible regional approach
- Important role of mentoring and support for RDOs to implement M&E ‘on the ground’
- Attribution to project – where we can, but complex extension and learning models
- Revisit purpose and principles – the importance of practicality at regional level
- Demonstrating value from investing in extension – grower (levy payer) and funder
- Promoting continuous improvement – the ‘plan, do, review’ cycle at various scales

Thank you

